

NEW FELLOWS

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**Michael H. Renfroe, Ph.D.**

Dr. Michael H. Renfroe, an active member of the Academy since 1986, served as Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President, and President- Elect the Academy before being elected the 89th President at the 2011 Annual Meeting. He has also served as Vice-Chair, Secretary and Chair of the Botany Section. He currently serves the Virginia Flora Committee and the Long-Range Planning Committee as well as the VAS Visiting Scientists Program Speakers Bureau.

Dr. Renfroe joined the Biology Department at James Madison University (JMU) in 1986 as an assistant Professor and became full Professor in 2003. Before joining the faculty at James Madison University, he served a Teaching Associate at both North Carolina State and Ohio State Universities. In addition, he also held research positions at the associate, fellow, and post-doctoral levels at Ohio State University, the University of Georgia, Yale University, and Texas A&M University. His education degrees include a B.S. from North Carolina State University, a M.S. from Ohio State University, and both a Masters in Philosophy and a Ph.D. from Yale University.

Dr. Renfroe is both a master educator as well as a dedicated researcher. During his career at JMU, he has taught over 25 different courses while continuing his research with his students. In addition, he has authored or co-authored over 60 publications, proceedings, and abstracts. He and/or his students have presented over 60 papers or posters including 29 at the Botany Section of VAS. Since becoming active with the Academy in 1986, he and/or his students have presented papers in the Botany Section at every VAS Annual Meeting. His professional service is diverse ranging from serving as a member of the Flora of Virginia Project Advisory Board and other botanically research-oriented organizations to organizations involved with science education at childhood to high school to college levels. He is also active as a reviewer for manuscripts for scientific journals and science textbooks.

Here is how Dr. Renfroe describes his dedication to education, research, and the role VAS plays in his professional life: “I started work at JMU in 1986. In addition to teaching biology to majors, I have been involved in teaching non-majors in the general education program. I also have been involved in teaching in-service and pre-service science teachers. For a number of years I was a teacher in a regional Governor’s School program during summers working with high school students whose studies focused on environmental themes. Some of my courses for majors include Plant Cell and Tissue Culture and an economic botany course. My research has focused on plant tissue culture and antioxidants in plant-based foods and beverages. My students and I have conducted research on propagation of Virginia round-leaf birch through bud and meristem culture. We also have conducted research on *Saintpaulia rupicola*, a critically-endangered species of African violet. We have developed methods of rapid propagation from leaf explants and have developed methods for production and short-term storage of synthetic seeds for African violets. We have examined the antioxidant content of fresh and processed forms of fruits such as blueberries and strawberries. We have also extensively studies tomatoes and tomato products, teas, spices, and wines. VAS helped launch my research career at JMU by providing grants that supported my research. VAS is a great training ground for undergraduate and graduate students learning to make professional presentations [and] provides an incredible opportunity to network and get to know fellow scientists from across the state. VAS has been a tremendous supporter of scientific research in Virginia and has provided research funds for an incredible number of scientists over the years. Personally, I think that every scientist in the Commonwealth should want to be a member of VAS so that we can demonstrate the power of science to improve our lives and to disseminate the newest information to make a more informed citizenry.”